

Message Text

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 ISO-00 NEA-10 EUR-12 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 AID-05 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 EB-08
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SUBJECT: MEXICO AND F-5 PURCHASES

FOLLOWING IS INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF SIGNED ARTICLE IN
FEBRUARY ISSUE OF LIBERAL MEXICO CITY WEEKLY PROCESO.

BEGIN TEXT.

HEADINGS: FOR WAR PLANES, THERE IS MONEY AVAILABLE.
A "TOY" FOR THE MILITARY, OR SOMETHING MORE
SERIOUS. IT IS THEREFORE BETTER FOR CYRUS VANCE TO SUSP-
END HIS VISIT.

BY MIGUEL LOPEZ AZUARA

DURING LAST MID-DECEMBER, GUATEMALA REQUESTED THE
UNITED STATES TO SELL IT A HALF DOZEN NORTHROP F-5 COMBAT
JETS, FOR A TOTAL COST OF THIRTY MILLION DOLLARS (690
MILLION PESOS). IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS THE MEXICAN
EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON ALSO REQUESTED FROM THE DEPARTMENT
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OF STATE TWENTY-SIX NORTHROP F-5 PLANES FOR 150 MILLION
DOLLARS (3,450 MILLION PESOS).

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE NOTIFIED THE PENTAGON AND
THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE REQUEST IN ORDER TO
KNOW THEIR OPINIONS.

TO DATE, IT HAS BEEN DECIDED NOT TO SELL THE JETS TO GUATEMALA, PRINCIPALLY FOR FEAR THAT IT WILL ATTACK BELIZE, A COUNTRY DEFENDED BY ENGLAND AND THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN STATES.

THE F-5 JET PLANES ARE NOT THE BEST IN THE FIELD, BUT THEY ARE ADEQUATE FOR THE NEEDS OF THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. THEY ARE LIGHT AND EASY TO FLY. EACH COSTS THREE MILLION DOLLARS (69 MILLION PESOS) BUT WITH MODIFICATIONS, AUXILIARY EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING, THE COST RISES TO FIVE OR MORE MILLION DOLLARS (115 MILLION PESOS).

BRAZIL, CHILE AND VENEZUELA HAVE SOME MODELS OF F-5 PLANES, BESIDES SOME MIRAGE SUOPPERSONICS OR BRITISH HAWKER HUNTERS. ARGENTINA AND COLOMBIA HAVE SOME OF THE TWO LAST-NAMED PLANES. CUBA HAS AT ITS DISPOSAL SUPER-SONIC MIGS.

GUATEMALA HAS ACQUIRED ISRAELI JETS, AND MIGHT ELECT TO OBTAIN MORE IN FACE OF THE UNITED STATES DENIAL OF ITS REQUEST FOR F-5S.

WITH REGARD TO MEXICO, ITS REQUEST FOR PLANES HAS DISCONCERTED THE AMERICANS, ACCORDING TO HIGH OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON.
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OF COURSE THEY IGNORE THE FACT THAT (MEXICO) MIGHT WANT TO PROTECT ITSELF FROM THE UNITED STATES, WHICH WOULD BE RIDICULOUS IN VIEW OF THE SIZE OF THE REQUEST IN THE FACE OF AMERICAN MIGHT. THEY SEE NO RISK OF A CONFRONTATION WITH GUATEMALA, BUT THEY BELIEVE THAT IN A MEXICO-GUATEMALA WAR, OUR NEIGHBORS TO THE SOUTH WOULD HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF BETTER TRAINED AND BETTER EQUIPPED ARMED FORCES; SHOULD THERE BE A LONG CONFRONTATION, THEN MEXICO WOULD DOMINATE DUE TO ITS GREATER MANPOWER.

THEY KNOW THAT NORTHROP HAS AN ACTIVE AGENT IN MEXICO WHO IS DISPOSED TO GRANT COMMISSIONS AND THEY BELIEVE THAT (THE SALE) MIGHT BE CONSIDERED FLATTERING TO THE ARMED FORCES, WHICH DO NOT HAVE VERY MODERN EQUIPMENT, AND AT THE SAME TIME THEY WOULD BE PERMITTED TO DO BUSINESS. THE MILITARY PERSONNEL CANNOT REMAIN INDEFINITELY UNMOVED, FACED WITH THE BANQUET WHICH POWERFUL MEMBERS OF THE CIVIL POWER ALLOW THEMSELVES.

UNTIL THE ENIGMA HAS BEEN DECIPHERED, THE AMERICANS HAVE DELAYED A REPLY TO THE REQUEST WHICH CONTINUES IN

EFFECT, IN SPITE OF WHAT HAS BEEN SAID HERE. TIME IS
GAINED BY ASKING HOW THE EXPENSE IS TO BE FINANCED. THEY
CAN ONLY WONDER WHY A COUNTRY IN ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES
SHOULD DEVOTE 3,450 MILLION PESOS NOT FOR THE ACQUISITION
OF FISHING BOATS OR FOR PATROLLING THEIR PLUNDERED
PATRIMONIAL SEA, BUT FOR THE PURCHASE OF WAR PLANES.

SIMULTANEOUSLY, THEY MAKE A COUNTER-PROPOSAL:
ANOTHER TYPE OF PLANE IS SUGGESTED, LESS COMPLICATED
BUT CHEAPER. IN ANY CASE, EVEN THOUGH PRESIDENT CARTER
ANNOUNCED ON MAY 19TH HIS PROPOSAL TO REDUCE THE SALE
OF ARMS "SUBSTANTIALLY", MEXICO CAN TURN TO FRANCE,
GREAT BRITAIN OR ISRAEL TO OBTAIN THE PLANES. END TEXT.
THOMPSON
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